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CURRENT TRENDS AND PRACTICES IN SCHOOL PUBLIC RELATIONS, A RESEARCH PROJECT.

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FEATURES OF THE PUBLIC RELATIONS PROGRAMS OF MEMBER SCHOOLS OF THE SPONSORING COUNCIL ARE EVALUATED AND COMPARED WITH THE STANDARDS OF EIGHT CURRENT TEXTS ON SCHOOL PUBLIC RELATIONS. THE SIX CATEGORIES DISTINGUISHED FOR EVALUATION INCLUDE (1) ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATIONS, (2) FACULTY AND STAFF ACTIVITIES, (3) PUPIL ACTIVITIES AND PUBLICATIONS, (4) SCHOOL PUBLICATIONS, (5) PATRON ACTIVITIES, AND (6) MISCELLANEOUS ACTIVITIES. EXCERPTS FROM THE TEXTS ARE INCLUDED IN A REVIEW OF LITERATURE RELATED TO EACH OF THE CATEGORIES. DIFFERENTIAL RESPONSES TO A QUESTIONNAIRE OF 50 ITEMS ARE APPRAISED WITH RESPECT TO ESTABLISHED PUBLIC RELATIONS POLICIES, EFFORTS TO INCREASE EFFECTIVENESS, A SCHOOL PAPER, LOCAL NEWSPAPER COVERAGE, PUBLICATION AND DISTRIBUTION OF AN ANNUAL REPORT, PUPIL EVALUATION, A SCHOOL YEARBOOK, PTA AND SIMILAR ORGANIZATIONS, ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMS, SPECIAL SPECTATOR AND PARTICIPANT EVENTS FOR THE PUBLIC, TEACHER-PARENT CONFERENCES, AND LOCAL RADIO PUBLICITY. MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE SCHOOL PUBLIC RELATIONS PROGRAMS INCLUDE (1) APPOINTMENT OF A STAFF MEMBER WITH RESPONSIBILITY TO DEVELOP SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS, (2) ORGANIZATION OF A PROGRAM WITH SPECIFIC LONG-RANGE PLANS, (3) INCREASED REPRESENTATION OF PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS IN CIVIC SPEAKING ASSIGNMENTS, (4) REGULAR PUBLICATION OF A SCHOOL PAPER, (5) PUBLICATION OF AN ANNUAL REPORT, AND (6) EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION BY ADMINISTRATORS AND TEACHERS TO INCREASE THE USEFULNESS OF THE PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATION. (JK)

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Current Trends and Practices In School Public Relations

Prepared by
Gerald W. Pinson

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East Texas School Study Council

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CURRENT TRENDS AND PRACTICES IN SCHOOL PUBLIC RELATIONS

A Research Project

Conducted for

the

EAST TEXAS SCHOOL STUDY COUNCIL

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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by

Gerald W. Pinson

January 1967

FOREWORD

This publication is the first research effort of the East Texas School Study Council. The topic was one of two selected by member schools for investigation during this initial year of operation. Gerald Pinson, Research Assistant, has done a commendable job on this project. Credit is also due Larry Wisdom and Mrs. Carol Hammack who typed the masters.

We hope that this research proves useful in the improvement of public relations programs in East Texas.

Respectfully,

Lynn Turner

Lynn Turner
Director

March 7, 1967

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM, PROCEDURE, AND DEFINITION OF TERMS USED

On the day that the first instruction took place in an institution, someone had to pay for it, and for just that long institutions have been, or should have been, interested in public relations. Although we often speak of "free" public education, it should be generally understood that a great deal of money is necessary to support "free" education. Such things as buildings, instructional materials, and teacher support must be paid for, and in the case of tax-supported institutions, it is the tax-paying public who must do the paying. Although money is theoretically appropriated by various legislatures, such appropriations must ultimately have the approval of the general public if they are to continue. This being true, it might be concluded that there is some correlation between a public's understanding of, and appreciation for, a project, and its generosity toward that project. It would also seem to follow that relationships with the public, whether they be good or bad, are inescapable for an institution.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. It was the purpose of this study (1) to determine to what extent public relations programs exist among member schools of the East Texas School Study Council; (2) to determine to what extent these public relations programs are organized: and (3) to show a comparison of these programs as they relate to those activities currently

being advocated in public relations textbooks.

Significance of the Study. Before one can have a proper appreciation for the public relations problems of an educational institution, it is necessary that he understand the institution's role and place in the democratic social order. Educational institutions have no inherent authority. They exist at the behest of the people, and their purposes are threefold. They should maintain, reproduce, and improve the society which produced them. (3:3)

Education is primarily a problem of the state government, but it must be realized that it is not the state's only problem. As life becomes more complex, such things as roads, prisons, judicial systems, and police protection are demanding a greater slice of the state budget, and they are ready to justify their demands. For many years, educators have covered the inadequacies of our educational system by telling the public of the many wonderful things that could be done, if only the money were available. This money is now being supplied in previously-unheard-of proportions from local, state, and federal sources. So it appears that they are going to have to produce those long-talked-about results, or find a new excuse. However, if they are to capitalize on this current generosity, and keep the flow of money coming, the light of self-improvement must not be hidden under a basket. The cost of education has reached the point where the assumption that it must cost more each year is becoming rebuttable. Educators must become "earthy" enough to "sell" their product to the public. (2:3)

Delimitation of the Problem. This study was limited to public schools holding membership in the East Texas School Study Council. It was further limited to a determination of public relations programs as they existed at the time of the study, and did not attempt to measure the effectiveness

of these programs, except to compare them with those activities currently being advocated in public relations textbooks.

Sources of Data. Data for this study were secured from the following sources: (1) a study of the leading textbooks in the field of educational public relations, and (2) responses to a questionnaire which was filled in by the various superintendents, with the aid of the researcher.

II. PROCEDURE

1. A letter was mailed to the superintendent of each school. This letter briefly explained the nature of the study, solicited his participation, and requested a time for an appointment. The letter contained a postal card which he was to return, indicating whether or not he was willing to participate, and verifying the appointment.

2. The researcher visited each school at the appointed time and assisted the superintendent in filling in the data-gathering instrument.

3. Superintendents who did not return the postal card, indicating a willingness to participate, were removed from the list and were not included in the study.

4. Superintendents who returned the postal card indicating a willingness to participate, but who could not meet with the researcher at the appointed time, were sent a questionnaire through the mail. They were asked to fill in the questionnaire and return it to the researcher. Those who did not return the questionnaire were removed from the study.

5. All participants in the study were informed that the data would be treated collectively, so that no pressure would be placed on any particular institution or person.

6. The data have been presented by tables which indicate the extent

to which these programs are organized.

7. Recommendations have been made based on an analysis of the data gathered.

8. Results of the study have been made available to all schools which are members of the East Texas School Study Council.

Data-Gathering Instrument. The instrument used in gathering data for this study was devised in the following manner.

1. Eight textbooks, which seemed to the researcher to be among the leading books in the field, were chosen as source material.

2. After studying each of these eight books the researcher decided that, for purposes of this study, educational public relations could best be divided into the following six categories: (1) Administrative Organizations, (2) Faculty and Staff Activities, (3) Pupil Activities and Publications, (4) School Publications, (5) Patron Activities, and (6) Miscellaneous Activities.

3. Books chosen for the study included: (1) Public Relations for Educators by Gloria Dapper, (2) School Public Relations by Leslie Kindred, (3) Introduction to Public Relations by Ward Reeder, (4) the American Association of School Administrators' Twenty-eighth Yearbook, (5) School Public Relations by Arthur Moehlman and James van Zwoll, (6) Public Relations for Teachers by Doyle Bortner, (7) How to Tell the School Story by Leslie Kindred, and (8) Public Relations in Education by Brownell, Gans, and Maroon.

4. Each of these eight books was studied more closely so that it might be determined how much emphasis each author placed upon activities within each of the six categories.

5. Questions were devised which, in the opinion of the researcher reflect the consensus of emphasis of the authors.

Assumptions. In the planning of this survey, the following assumptions were made:

1. Lay citizens in the community, as well as professional educators on the school staff, have the welfare of the students as an ultimate goal.
2. Cooperation will exist where good communications and understanding exist.
3. Persons questioned in the survey will answer honestly and to the best of their ability.

III. DEFINITION OF TERMS USED

Public. For purposes of this study the word "public" shall refer to a number of people with a group relationship, such as some dominant interest.

Public relations. Public relations refers to activities in which an educational institution engages in building and maintaining sound and productive associations with its various publics.

CHAPTER REFERENCES

1 American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education, Public Relations for Teacher Education, (Oneonta, New York: 1950), p. 7.

2 Illinois State Normal University, School Public Relations, (Springfield: 1961), p. 3.

3. Arthur Moehlman and James van Zwoll, School Public Relations, (New York: Appleton-Centurn-Crofts, 1964), p. 3.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In recent years there have been volumes written about educational public relations; however, most all of the surveys and writings in this area have been of a speculative nature. In fact much of the literature in the field of educational public relations is comprised of subjective observations of personal experiences of the writers and there has actually been very little scientific research done.

I. LITERATURE ON ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION

Moehlman and van Zwoll (7:163) advocate that, since education is the responsibility of the state, educational public relations policies should have their origin at the state level. They contend that the least that any state can do is to pass permissive legislation which will make it possible for the local school district to spend the money necessary for the support of an effective public relations program. However, they emphasize that, regardless of what public relations policies are extant at the state level, it is necessary for each school district to have its own policy in this regard. Though an oral policy is better than no policy at all, it is obvious that it is better for all concerned if the policy is written.

According to Kindred (5:16) this policy should reflect the objectives of the overall public relations program, which he suggests should be as follows:

1. To develop intelligent public understanding of the school in all aspects of its operation.
2. To determine how the public feels about the school and what it wishes the school to accomplish.

3. To secure adequate financial support for a sound educational program.
4. To help citizens feel a more direct responsibility for the quality of education the school provides.
5. To earn the good will, respect, and confidence of the public in professional personnel and services of the institution.
6. To bring about public realization of the need for change and what must be done to facilitate essential progress.
7. To involve citizens in the work of the school and the solving of educational problems.
8. To promote a genuine spirit of cooperation between the school and community in sharing leadership for the improvement of community life.

Ward Reeder (1951) reflects the predominant attitude of writers in the field of educational public relations in his statement that, unavoidably, the public holds certain convictions about the schools, believes certain things to be true, and, when the word "school" is pronounced, conjures up a particular mental picture. These convictions, opinions, and mental images are the product of public relations, planned or otherwise. When these convictions do not square with the truth, a breakdown in communications is indicated.

It is imperative that the school system make continuous efforts to maintain communication with every patron within its district because, left alone, a patron may form his opinion of the entire school system as a result of one single experience. The story is told of a lady who passed through a college town one time, and since she was in no particular hurry, she stopped to spend a few minutes on the campus. The students of this school displayed such an attitude of warmth and friendliness that she was greatly impressed. Upon the death of this lady, some twenty years later, it was discovered that she had left a sizeable estate to the school, even though she knew no one who had attended it and though she had been on its campus only that one time for a few minutes. Of equal significance is the impression made by those students who represent the school in competitive activities, or

other occasions which bring them into contact with people outside the school system. They have opportunities to impress citizens who will have no other association with the school. (1:127)

The significance of a successful public relations program was emphasized by the results of a recent survey. According to Dapper (4:10), most superintendents lose their jobs, not because of academic incompetence, but because of the inability to deal effectively with the community.

It appears that one of the most difficult aspects of educational public relations is that of leadership. Successful leadership, which has been defined as the "engineering of consent," consists of getting people to follow you because they want to, not because you want them to. There are some public relations jobs which the superintendent must do, but just as certainly, he cannot do everything. (1:140)

Moehlman and van Zwoll (7:251) agree that, even in a relatively small community, it is impossible for one person to carry the full burden of maintaining and improving relations between the school and the public. They continue by pointing out that the superintendent must be a leader, but that autocratic methods and individual effort is bound to be futile. Likewise, showy, high pressure, publicity will not compensate for the negative attitude of school personnel.

Bortner (2:114) advocates that the administration share the limelight with other staff members for several reasons. It takes some of the burden off of him, it keeps him from "over-appearing" before the public, and it impresses the community with the quality of the entire staff.

It would be interesting to know how many superintendents are described in Frederick Moffitt's poem, which appeared in "Chalk Dust," Nation's Schools, 42:43, August, 1948.

EPITAPH

In public school relations
He followed every rule.
Except he advertised himself
And quite forgot his school.

One of the first prerequisites for successful leadership in educational public relations is accessibility. Moehlman and van Zwoll (:254) expressed this philosophy when they said:

> Corporation officers may hide their chief executives on the upper floors of skyscrapers, but the rule of accessibility requires that public executives be easy to reach. The superintendent's office should be on the first floor, near the main entrance.

According to AASA (1:39), the public relations program must show the people a correlation between education and certain abstract values, must translate these values into specific needs, and must incorporate these needs into operating procedures.

Ward Reeder (:18) emphasized the need for a positive approach to the situation:

> The public relations service of a school or school system should be definately organized and systematized just as every other school service should be organized and systematized; this will require planning. Unless planning of it is done, this important service is likely to be a 'hit-or-miss' variety or to be entirely neglected. 'Incidental' public relations activities are apt to be 'accidental' and deleterious. An organization and systematization of the service is needed whether the school or school system be large or small, or of any type as to purposes.

The importance of public relations as a part of the duties of school administrators was emphasized at a recent meeting of the AASA: (1:134)

> Whatever his natural ability, every person who prepares for school administration should take the opportunity, in both his college and university preparation, to study public school relations. It is not enough for him to take one or more courses in public relations. This is valuable and necessary, but the future administration needs more help than that offered in specific courses. He needs, in addition, to develop public relations consciousness in techniques in connection with all phases of his training. Graduate students need special provisions for receiving guidance and demonstrating proficiency in handling public relations.

Most authors within the field of educational public relations agree that success of the public relations program depends, among other things, upon continuous appraisal of its purposes, its means, and its results. The AASA (1:263) lists the following items as checkpoints to be used in evaluation:

1. Observe coverage which is received in the local papers. Is coverage sufficient? Does it tend to be complimentary rather than critical? Editorials and letters from readers should be observed, as well as feature articles.
2. How many people cast votes at school elections? How does the percentage of total population compare with that at previous elections? Is the trend toward more or less approval of school issues?
3. How well do patrons attend extra-curricular activities?
4. How about PTA attendance and membership? Are at least 60% of parents members, and do at least 50% of the members attend each meeting?
5. Do patrons attend meetings of the school board?
6. Are adult education classes well attended?
7. How well do patrons respond to appeals to help in school projects?
8. How many grievances do you have from patrons, and what is their nature?
9. What about pupil attendance, behavior, and drop-outs?
10. Is the community ready to accept the leadership of teachers in churches and other civic organizations?
11. What reaction do business leaders express in response to various school activities and programs?
12. What is the attitude of other public agencies toward the school? Do you enjoy their cooperation and assistance?

The AASA points out that one of the most harmful mistakes in public relations is the notion that it is essentially responses to a series of crises. To the contrary, it must be the result of continuous long-range plans. Another point of caution is the fact that people will not support schools in order to provide better salaries and living conditions for teachers. Yet, they will support them in order to provide better education for their children. (1:21,50)

II. LITERATURE ON FACULTY AND STAFF ACTIVITIES

Moehlman and van Zwoll (7:295) state that the teacher is unquestionably the most important link in the public relations program. The primary reason for this belief is the fact that the teacher comes into closer, and

more constant, contact with the pupil than does any other member of the school staff.

Bortner (2:9) supports this theory with the following statement:

> The teacher is unquestionably the most influential single factor in developing public opinion concerning the school. Despite the attention given to other phases of its program, the school that loses sight of the teacher's vital role in public relations will never maintain the necessary support of the community.

The work of the classroom teacher has changed in recent years, so that it now includes many aspects other than actual performance in the classroom. This philosophy is supported by Moehlman and van Zwoll: (:296)

> The work of the teacher in a democratic social institution extends far beyond the mechanics of classroom management--a cloistered existence is not possible for the teacher today. Successful teaching requires intimate knowledge of home conditions, and of the social, economic, and cultural background of the family.
>
> The public school teacher is not a free agent and can never expect to be. Acceptance of employment as an agent of the state and local district immediately places restrictions upon the teacher. Since the public school teacher is responsible for the direction of the immature, the legitimacy of reasonable community demands with respect to teacher conduct is indubitable.

Bortner (2:11) points out that the teacher who is apathetic toward school public relations needs to realize that not only the school's welfare but his own personal welfare, especially salary, depends upon public appreciation and support.

The AASA (:140) states that the best place for a superintendent to begin in the delegation of authority and responsibility is by inventorying the faculty to ascertain their membership in community clubs and associations, their special interests, their special talents, and their willingness to work in given areas of public relations. From this inventory it will be possible for the superintendent to make up a speaker's bureau comprised of teachers who have the ability and are willing to make appearances before civic clubs and other groups. He will want to maintain a supply of public relations

materials, as well as the necessary equipment, for these teachers to use in their presentations.

Moehlman and van Zwoll (7:266) support this idea as follows:

> The socially alert superintendent will arrange to obtain complete information on the various social and economic groups through the participation of school personnel in the organizations. The more widely the community comes in contact with the teaching staff, the greater will be the understanding, confidence, and respect for the school and its achievements.

The teacher's religious activities are a source of good public relations which is often neglected. Some school administrators hesitate to capitalize upon this medium because they feel that religion falls into the realm of personal privacy which should not be invaded by the school. It must be pointed out that this philosophy is contrary to that advocated by every major work in the field of educational public relations. The AASA (1:164) advocated that teachers be active in community activities such as Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, YMCA, YWCA, and churches.

Bortner (2:64) makes the statement even more emphatically. "Except for civic organizations, the teacher's contacts with churches often are his best opportunity for furthering school public relations through organized community groups."

According to the AASA (1:162) one of the first jobs the administrator should undertake in the area of public relations is to attempt to overcome the unfavorable stereotype of the teacher which comes into most minds upon the mention of the word "teacher." They suggest that one way to do this is to "play up" the human interest activities and achievements of the faculty. Special attention should be given to any activities in which teachers exercise influence or leadership in areas outside the field of education. This would include such things as being selected as an officer in a civic

club, serving as a scout leader, teaching a Sunday School class, etc.

One of the best ways to insure that teachers will be public-relations minded is to see that they "get started on the right foot" when moving into a new community. Bortner (2:95) suggests a number of things which administrators should do in helping new teachers become oriented in the community.

1. Help them find suitable housing. It is sometimes very difficult for a new person in the community to find respectable housing, and yet stay within his financial means.
2. Supply them with published information describing the community. This should be done after they have accepted the position, but prior to the time they move.
3. After the teacher has arrived in the community, an "old" teacher should be assigned to each new teacher to assist him in becoming oriented.
4. The administration should sponsor social affairs for the purpose of introducing new teachers to the community.
5. The administration should sponsor "tours" of the district in which new teachers are shown all school buildings, bus routes, etc.
6. New teachers should be assisted in getting acquainted with community leaders who have kindred talents and interests.

After a teacher has begun work in a school system there are a number of things which he can, and should, do toward the furtherance of good school-community relations. Bortner (2:46) lists the following:

1. Send home a biographical sketch of himself. This sketch should include such things as educational training, experience background, hobbies, etc.
2. Send home a list of office hours during which parents might schedule conferences. Be sure to include some hours during the evening when working parents might call.
3. Send home a mimeographed "newsletter" containing small bits of information which would be of interest to parents.
4. Send home tests before work on a particular unit is begun--then send home a similar test after the unit has been completed. These tests should reflect the learning which has taken place.
5. Send home periodic "Can you pass this, your child did" tests.
6. Send home a suggested list of toys and books which are appropriate for the age level.
7. Give immediate attention and interest to pupil illness or injury.
8. Send home "thank you" notes for special work of student.

Whether or not teachers should visit in the homes of pupils has long been a question for discussion. A definite conclusion has not yet

been reached; however, the trend seems to be in favor of such visits. As late as 1957 Moehlman and van Zwoll (6:305) stated that the disadvantages of such visits usually outweighed the advantages. Prior to this, in 1953, Reeder (6:177) had this to say:

> Teachers should be encouraged to meet and know the parents of their pupils, but whether they should be required to visit the homes of the parents is still decidedly controversial. Decisions on this question should not be made by school officials of school administrators until the issue has been discussed fully by them with teachers and parents.

That there is a trend toward favoring home visits can be seen by the fact that Kindred has altered his stand. In a 1957 publication he expresses doubt as to the overall validity of such visits, but in his 1960 publication he describes them as "most effective."

> Teacher visits to the homes of pupils are the subject of divided opinion among school people.... help to understand pupils, but many teachers are obnoxious..... Despite arguments on both sides, the fact remains that many school systems have profited from following a home visitation policy, while others have undergone experiences they do not wish to repeat. (5:138)

> Parents always like the teacher and the school when they see a sincere interest in their children. Parental interest in the school may be developed through many techniques, but a visit to the home is most effective on every grade level. (6:293)

Although primary interest has been given to the public relations responsibilities of teachers, it would be erroneous to leave the impression that other members of the school staff are omitted from mention in educational public relations textbooks. Most every author in the field devotes a respectable amount of space to sentiments similar to those of the AASA: (1:168)

> Every staff member is a public relations agent. His manners, bearing, dress, and his attitude toward and treatment of children and parents are the raw materials out of which school public relations are forged.

Reeder (6:256) agrees that contact (front office) personnel should be neat, attractive, intelligent, tactful, and public relations conscious. No

one has more to do with public relations than the secretary. She is the telephone voice of the school, receives complaints, greets visitors, salesmen, etc. How she handles an original complaint may well determine whether or not it goes any further.

III. LITERATURE ON PUPIL ACTIVITIES AND PUBLICATIONS

There is a preponderence of literature to indicate the importance of the student in the public relations program. Bortner (2:12) seems to express the opinion of most of the writers in the field quite well:

> Undoubtedly, the pupil is the most immediate, most constant, probably the most energetic, and certainly the most talkative link between school and community. This has staggering implications for school public relations when the single pupil is multiplied by the tens of millions enrolled in the nation's schools. It is a public relations position enjoyed by no other public or private enterprise, for all these pupils are potential ambassadors of good or ill will.

The AASA (1:59) agrees that the success or failure of the school's public relations program may well rest upon the attitude of its students:

> The attitudes of children toward their school and their teachers, the intrinsic value of what is done at school, the extent to which the school understands and meets the special needs of every pupil, the contacts of teachers with parents thru conferences and reports, these and many other aspects of the ongoing school program are the foundations on which the structure of community goodwill must either stand or fall.

However, the AASA adds that, before the child can be a good public relations vehicle he must be well informed. They advocate that every student should be educated as to how the educational system works. He should be aware of the over-all program, as well as the significance of each course in the curriculum and its importance within the program.

Perhaps the oldest and most commonly used medium of school contact with parents, through students, is grade reporting. Although it has been subject to a great amount of questioning within recent years, and after a great deal of experimentation with other media, the old report card appears

to have emerged victorious again. To be sure, it has undergone numerous alterations and modifications. Some schools have attempted to replace the report card with parent-teacher conferences; however, most of these systems have found complete abandonment of grade cards to be unsatisfactory and have returned, at least partially, to them. Bortner (2:59) advocates a combination of report cards, letters, and parent conferences:

> In spite of certain advantages of the written letter over traditional report card, the really significant advance in reporting pupil progress has come with the development of the scheduled parent-teacher conference.

Bortner suggests that the teacher should take the initiative to create an air of informality in such conferences. The teacher should "come out from behind that desk" and meet the parent on equal ground. He also indicates that privacy is a necessity for such meetings and that teachers should abandon educational jargon--the use of such language is usually born out of an inferiority complex which brings about a need to "impress" the parent.

Another student-related public relations medium in use in many school systems is the student newspaper. This is a medium which has advanced greatly in recent years--possibly due to mechanical improvements in the printing process. Reeder (:76) points this out:

> The school newspaper has had a phenomenal growth. Whereas it was formerly found only in the large secondary schools and was frequently regarded only as an expensive plaything, it is found today in a large percentage of both large and small secondary schools and is regarded as a valuable adjunct to the work of the school. It has become almost ubiquitous in the secondary school.

Kindred (5:272) also recognizes the importance of the student newspaper as an instrument of influence:

> If school newspapers interpret the institution correctly, they have a definite influence upon the attitudes and ideas of many people. Surveys show that they are read by three fourths of the parents when brought home by pupils, and that parents rely upon them for announcements of parent-teacher association meetings and student events.

The AASA (1:293) points out that every student publication should reflect the objectives of the educational program. The public maintains some conception of the school program at all times--if some student publication is released which has a quality below the existing public conception, then the school's image has been lowered. The AASA also advocates that students be allowed to do most of the work on their publications, but hastens to add that the sponsor must never lose control of the situation.

Educational public relations literature points out many other areas in which efforts should be made to improve the student's role in school-community relations. These include any activity in which students perform and to which patrons are invited to attend. Specific mention is made of athletic contests, dramatic events, etc. Kindred (5:272) had this to say. "Musical programs win many friends, possibly more than any other type of activity." The AASA (1:71) advocates that students should be recognized for achievement in any area, not just for outstanding football ability.

IV. LITERATURE ON SCHOOL PUBLICATIONS

Gloria Dapper (4:108) emphasizes the fact that every school publication should have one aim or purpose. It is a mistake to try to cure all the ills of the school with one brochure. These publications should be attractive and dignified--yet they must be modest. Apparent extravagance in school publications will arouse the ire of patrons and might possibly have a negative effect, insofar as public relations are concerned. Inasmuch as as most superintendents have no experience or talent in the area of publications layout, they should seek outside help in this effort. Educators should strive conscientiously against the natural desire to fill their publications with educational jargon which is oftentimes confusing to school patrons.

According to Moehlman and van Zwoll (7:484) the oldest form of written communication between the school and the community is the annual report. This report, which is required by law in many states, has two main purposes--to report the condition of the school and to serve as an archival record. At one time these reports were very dull and boring, to the extent that very few people took the trouble to read and analyze them. The trend in recent years has been to make the annual report more understandable and more interesting through the use of charts, graphs, and pictures.

This position is substantiated by Dapper (4:108) who says that the first school annual report was issued in Massachusettes in 1738. She maintains that, even now, school reports are too often dull to look at and dull to read.

Reeder (8:95) feels that annual reports have lost some of their previous importance but that they are still an instrument of value in the public relations program:

> School reports were one of the earliest formal and organized means of informing the people concerning the schools. Although other means have largely supplanted them, they are still widely used and considered to have large value in the public relations program, especially in the large school systems.

In addition to the annual report, Reeder (8:166) also advocates the use of a circular-type letter as a means of communicating with parents:

> The circular letter, or similar communication to the home, is an excellent means of making continuous contacts with the home. Through such means it is possible to reach, directly or indirectly, every home, particularly of parents, in the community. The only objection to its use is the cost, which, in many cases, is prohibitive.

Another form of school publication is the "house organ," which, according to Moehlman and van Zwoll (7:498) serves to develop a spirit group morale and solidarity. It is a necessary supplement to personal

contact, especially in a large system. It should be bright, sprightly, and interesting--not filled with technical information. This "house organ" can be found in any number of formats. Some contain information and news of primary interest to faculty, while others are designed to be distributed among patrons. Some take the form of a mimeographed newsletter, and others fall more into the category of "slick" magazines.

Many reasons are given in support of the need for a teachers' handbook. Two of the most prevalent of these are the fact that a handbook can prevent teachers from making needless mistakes and that it will save the administrator an immense amount of time in answering repetitious questions. Justification for a teachers' handbook appears to be summarized very capably in the following statement by Reeder: (8:128)

> Teachers need and desire information on innumerable matters--the teachers' handbook readily gives needed information and gives it in an accurate and ungarbled form.

V. LITERATURE ON PATRON ACTIVITIES

The great preponderence of literature relating to patrons' activities concerns itself with variations of the parent-teacher organization. Most of the textbooks reviewed devote an entire chapter to this area; however, it appears that all of these writings are summarized very capably by Reeder: (:140)

> A parent-teacher organization has avenues of contact which are potent and far-reaching. Through these avenues it is possible to reach not only the parents but the general public, because the parents who are members of the organization have social and business contacts with other persons.

On the negative side of the picture Bortner (2:51) lists seven reasons which he feels are primary causes for the failure of parent-teacher groups:

1. Disinterest of teachers and administrators.
2. Domination by teachers and administrators.
3. Domination by a small group of parents for self-aggrandizement.
4. Use for airing personal quarrels and complaints.
5. Believing its function to be that of controlling education.
6. Degenerating into an impotent "ladies-aid society."
7. Focusing efforts on making money for the school.

In addition to the popular parent-teacher organization there are other types of groups which bring parents and citizens into contact with the school. Kindred (5:177) suggests two:

> Supplemental to the parent-teacher association, and sometime independent of it, are mothers' and fathers' clubs. Experience has shown that fathers" and mothers" clubs can be relied upon to support projects and proposals beneficial to an individual school or an entire school system.

As previously mentioned there has been a great amount of discussion as to the relative merits of the report card as a means of communicating with parents. It appears that most writers in the field favor some modification of this system, as proposed by Reeder: (8:172)

> Since most report cards do not indicate the cause of unsatisfactory work, there should be a conference between the teacher and the parents to determine whether low marks received by the pupil are due to poor physical condition, mental disturbances, lack of effort, slowness in learning, irregular attendance, or another cause.

This enthusiasm for the parent-teacher conference is carried even further by Kindred: (5:136)

> Because parent conferences have turned out to be a valuable method of clearing up sources of misunderstanding and of interpreting the instructional program, several elementary schools have substituted them for the time-honored report card system.

One point of emphasis which appears in most of the more recently published textbooks is the belief that schools should plan more of their activities, especially conference hours, with the working-parent in mind. Many parents are truly interested in the progress of their children and would desire to take an active part in their education, but are prohibited because of the fact that both parents work. (5:310)

VI. LITERATURE ON MISCELLANEOUS ACTIVITIES

All of the specific media which can be used in the educational public relations program, and which do not seem to fit into any of the five previous categories, have been collected into a miscellaneous group. It is not intended that this list should be considered complete inasmuch as various public relations media are limited only by individual imagination. This enumeration does include some public relations efforts which have been used by different schools with varying degrees of success.

According to Kindred (5:39) the community survey is the best place to start in the planning of a public relations program:

> The preparation of a school public relations program should start with the collecting, organizing, and analyzing of factual information about the community. The method of obtaining this information on life within the geographical area served by the school is known as a sociological survey. The sociological survey is not new; it has been used by educators, sociologists, and business people to eliminate guesswork in planning various kinds of projects. The survey has been subject to much criticism within recent years because of misuse and wasteful expenditures of time and labor. However, properly conducted surveys have demonstrated their value as tools in the achievement of important objectives.

Moehlman and van Zwoll (7:178) agree that a proper understanding of the community provides the foundation from which the school-community public relations program derives its strength and effectiveness. The survey has been used in education at least since 1845 when Horace Mann conducted the first one of which there is record. The survey can be conducted by local people or it can be done by professional pollers; however, it will be more meaningful, as well as cheaper, when done locally. The survey must be done in such a way as to command the confidence of the people but it must not arouse such antipathies that the public will be prejudiced against it before its results are released.

Moehlman and van Zwoll (7:497) contend that the survey should

serve two purposes--to assure the public that its school's activities are under constant scrutiny and desire to improve--and to indicate which direction the school board should pursue in the case of a questionable situation.

All writers in the field recognize the local newspaper as being an important link in the public relations program; however, there seems to be some divergence of opinion as to just what position the press should occupy. For instance, Brownell, Gans, and Maroon (3:107) would place the press very high on the list:

> The newspaper, which seems to be a more or less neglected medium, will be dissected and studied first. This by no means implies that newspapers represent the most vital or most direct line to the public. It does mean that newspapers constitute the most untapped possibility for sound and important publicity in education.

Reeder (8:45) appears to concur with the above-mentioned opinion:

> In value as a public-school-relations agency, the newspaper must be accorded a high rank, because, as has already been stated, practically all people regularly read at least one newspaper, and they probably receive more information from the newspaper than from any other source.

However, Moehlman and van Zwoll (7:454) appear to feel that the newspaper no longer occupies the important place in school-public relations that it once did. They indicate that its place of prominence has been successfully challenged by radio, television, and motion pictures. It is their contention that rural (weekly) papers still exercise influence as a molder of public opinion.

Reeder (8:61) suggests that a school section in the community paper is gaining in popularity and he lists three reasons which he feels justifies such a section:

1. Gives the school an outlet for its news.
2. Gives the students journalistic experience.
3. Gives the paper free and interesting news.

It may well be that today's public relations practitioners have at their disposal more means of communication than have ever been in existence before. This thought is supported by Brownell, Gans, and Maroon: (3:205)

> Never before in the history of civilization have the opportunities for better public relations been so great. Two relatively recent and exciting media--radio and television--with their mass appeal have made this possible. Most authorities readily agree that these two means of communication represent the greatest technical advances in public relations since the invention of the printing press.

The AASA (1:284) points out that practically every community in America is served by a radio station and that radio is becoming increasingly popular as a public relations medium. They suggest that schools enter into the area of sponsored programs, as well as spot announcements and news casts.

Moehlman and van Zwoll (7:466) stress the importance of radio as a public relations medium by pointing out the fact that there are now about 150 million radio sets in the United States and that at least 14 million of these are in homes which do not have television sets. Another 40 million are in cars, listened to by people who do not have access to a television set at the time they are listening. They advocate that radio be used to report speakers, panels, contests, expositions, news, sports, plays, and for spot announcements.

Dapper (4:88) says that if the school administrator wishes to use radio in his public relations program, he should get acquainted with the news editor and the program editor. She hastens to add that small stations may be run by one or two people, so the administrator must furnish ready-to-use material. Each station aims at a specific audience, so it is important that the right material be sent to the right station. Dapper also advocates that the administrator study the program log to see what existing programs might be put to use. In many instances this is superior to attempting to schedule a regular program for the school.

Although television is a relatively new medium of communication, it receives quite a bit of attention in public relations textbooks. Although some authors seem to feel that television is very little more than an extension of radio, Kindred (5:358) disagrees:

> Television is more than just the addition of sight to sound. It is an entirely new communication medium combining an array of techniques in the use of colors, motion, and sound. Television appears to offer exceptional possibilities for the diffusior of knowledge and culture and the molding of public opinion.

Dapper (4:92) points out that, even though television stations offer public service time which would be available to schools, it is much more difficult to acquire good time on television than on radio. Consequently the school administrator should strive to get a program good enough to attract a sponsor who will buy prime time for presentation. She says that anything which will go on radio will probably be better on television, providing that it is illustrated with still visual pieces or with motion pictures.

Moehlman and van Zwoll (7:466) state that there are more than 600 television transmitting stations and more than 35 million television receiving sets in the United States today, and that television should be used much the same as is radio, with the addition of classroom observations, films, and demonstrations.

Historically the school building has played varying rolls in school-community relations. In the early days of education many school buildings were built with labor contributed by the citizens of the community. Some who could not contribute labor contributed money for the purpose of buying materials. Under this arrangement it was generally considered that the school building belonged to the community and the community used it for most every purpose which arose. There came a time when there seemed to exist a

feeling that schools, and everything connected with them, belonged to professional educators--during this time many schools did not allow community use of the school plant. However, in recent years educators have come to realize that one of their very best opportunities to improve school-community relations is by getting patrons to visit the school building. Reeder (8:208) discusses this trend as follows:

> School buildings today are being opened for the use of the general public during evenings, vacations, and at other times when the work of the regular pupils will not be hindered. This movement toward a greater community use of the school plant provides the schools with one of their best opportunities for good public relations.

Moehlman and van Zwoll (7;509) contend that more concrete and physically tangible than all other aspects of the school public relations activity is that of the school plant. It includes the site, building, and equipment of the school, and is the physical and observable impression of the educational program of the school district.

It appears that many school districts are overlooking this area of public relations. Other districts may be allowing community use of the school plant with the result that their public relations are hampered rather than helped. This situation could be brought about as a result of an antagonistic attitude surrounding community use of the building, or as a result of a poorly kept building which lowers the existing concept of the school. Reeder (8:197) speaks very strongly in this regard:

> Whereas the school plant should be one of the most beautiful and best kept places in the community, it is frequently a community eyesore and "an abomination unto the Lord." Often it is hardly fit to shelter farm animals. Often the schoolyard is not landscaped; often the exterior of the building is unpainted, or in other bad state of repair; often the corridors and classrooms have never been decorated; often a picture or other work of art cannot be found in the building; and often the school furniture has been irreparably whittled away by pupils' knives. "A thing of beauty is a joy forever," but many school plants are far from being joys.

Closely associated with community use of the school building would be school activities which bring patrons to the building. One such activity is the school exhibits, which gives the school an opportunity to display work of the pupils, as well as the school plant. Reeder (8:179) has this to say. "School exhibits present an excellent opportunity for the public to interpret the school. It is here that many complaints which tend to persist in spite of efforts at educational enlightenment are answered."

Brownell, Gans, and Maroon (3:219) feel that most of the lack of understanding which supplies the foundation for parent disapproval of schools can be overcome through the proper use of exhibits and demonstrations:

> It is unusual to find parents who, if given the opportunity, do not try to understand the purpose and programs of instruction. What better way can education guide public opinion than to present a part of the actual activity program in the form of a demonstration? This can be done not merely once a year but at regular intervals, not for a select audience of parents but for everyone in the community who can be induced to attend.

Moehlman and van Zwoll (7:363) agree that exhibits are a concrete way of explaining to the people what the school is doing. They feel that exhibits are more effective if they are planned and supervised by the school children. Music and drama productions afford extraordinary opportunities for stimulation of community interest; however, care should be taken to insure that admission charges do not make it difficult for any family to attend.

At one time school alumni presented a ready-made opportunity for the improvement of public relations; however, in recent years the diversity of interests and the mobility of population have greatly minimized the importance of alumni as public relations potential. (7:372)

The superintendent should take such steps as are necessary so that he becomes proficient in all speaking situations whether it be as a speaker,

introducing the speaker, making presentations, as a presiding officer, in religious activities, or as a radio speaker. He should look upon every invitation as an honor, and he should take care that he does not bore audiences with a lot of educational jargon. (1:281)

The AASA (1:301) calls attention to the fact that most schools overlook billboards as a potential public relations medium. Many outdoor advertising companies devote a per cent of their boards to public service advertising and schools should certainly take advantage of the opportunity.

Every school should have a public relations calendar. This calendar should be located in the office of the person who directs the public relations program and it should be the control center of the entire program. According to Reeder (8:50) the calendar should make provisions for two types of articles for publication. These include items in which timeliness is important (or where a specific time is required by law), and items which would be of general interest to the public regardless of the time of publication.

Reeder (8:219) emphasizes the importance of American Education Week by saying, "...probably no similar span of time affords as excellent an opportunity to interpret the schools to the community."

Some media have come on to the scene too recently to receive a great deal of space in public relations textbooks; however, those authors who have published recently exhibit a great deal of enthusiasm for such media as audio-visual aids. Kindred (5:340) is among the most outspoken supporters:

> Without doubt audio-visual aids are the most effective media for mass communication today. Slides and film strips are visual aids which school systems can employ, regardless of their size, to acquaint the public with education in the local community.

Kindred (5:348) expresses equal enthusiasm for another relative new-comer to the field--motion pictures:

> With the possible exception of television, the school-made motion picture is the best audio-visual device a school can employ in furnishing information to the public. It permits the showing of actual conditions and practices, and even the technical aspects of plant operation, business management, and financial procedures. The material is easily understood and assimilated, and a substantial amount can be presented in a short space of time. The impressions left by motion pictures have a lasting and influential effect upon the formation of attitudes and opinions. The motion picture should have a definite place in the public relations program.

It is quite obvious that this chapter does not contain all the literature which has been written in the field of educational public relations; however, it is the hope of the researcher that it does contain material which is representative of that literature. It is also the hope of the researcher that the amount of space which this chapter devotes to each aspect of public relations bears some correlation to the amount of space given it in the textbooks.

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CHAPTER III

THE QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

The first four questions on the data-gathering instrument concern the school's enrollment, number of administrators, secretaries, and faculty. A number of persons who have reviewed the instrument have suggested that these questions have no relationship with a study of school public relations programs; however, the researcher has maintained, for the following reasons, that such questions are very pertinent. The number of scholastics in a school district certainly has some bearing on the district's public relations projects. It appears obvious that a school of 500 scholastics would not need the same type public relations program as a school of 20,000. By the same line of reasoning it is equally obvious that a superintendent in a small district, wherein he is the only full-time administrator and wherein there is no full-time secretarial help, will be so busy with other administrative duties that he will not have a great amount of time to spend in the pursuit of organized public relations. On the other hand a superintendent who has several assistant superintendents, a full-time principal in each building, and various secretaries and clerks, may be able to devote the majority of his own time to this type effort.

In a school which has an extremely high pupil-teacher ratio individual teachers will not be able to devote as much time to matters of public relations as will teachers in a district whose pupil-teacher ratio is lower.

Inasmuch as enrollment (ADA) in ETSSC member schools ranges from less than 170 to 14,653, it can be seen that a great amount of variation in public relations activities could have been anticipated.

There is an equally-wide gap in the number of full-time administrators, with the number varying from a minimum of one to a maximum of fifty-five.

The true significance of this situation can be seen only when it is pointed out that the school having fifty-five administrators also has seventy-seven full-time secretaries and clerks whereas each of the schools having one administrator has one, or no, secretary.

Concerning the ratio of pupils to teachers, the survey reflected a spread from a low of eleven to a high of twenty-seven. Ironically, there is an almost-perfect inverse correlation between the teacher-administrator ratio and the pupil-teacher ratio. In other words schools having the greatest number of teachers for each administrator have the lowest number of pupils per teacher. The teacher-administrator ratio of member schools ranges from a low of nine teachers for each administrator to a high of thirty.

The ratio of teachers per secretary covers the same spread as that of teachers per administrator, with the noted exception that some schools have no secretary at all.

TABLE I

Question	Yes	No
5. Does your school have a written policy concerning public relations?	4	19
6. Does your school have an organized public relations program?	7	16

At this point it would be very easy for the researcher to allow subjective judgment to take precedence over the results of the data-gathering instrument. Although four superintendents stated that their schools had written policies concerning public relations, closer investigation indicated that, in some instances, this "written policy" consists of only a superficial reference to public relations in the regular school board policies. In like manner it was felt by the researcher that some of the seven superintendents

who indicated that their schools have organized public relations programs interpreted the term "organized" in a very liberal manner.

All other questions included in the study shall be reported without subjective evaluation by the researcher.

In response to question number seven it was determined that only three schools have any person other than the superintendent in charge of the district's public relations program. In two instances this person is an assistant superintendent and in the third case he is a teacher. In no school was there found a public relations specialist, nor in any school was a principal or counselor in charge of public relations.

Answers to question number eight indicate that two schools have persons devoting as much as 50% of their time to public relations efforts. Three schools reported that the person in charge spends at least 25% of his time and the remaining eighteen districts specified less than 25%.

TABLE II

Question	Yes	No
9. Has any effort been made to cause every member of the faculty and staff to become public relations conscious?	19	4
10. Is the faculty of your school encouraged to participate in community activities?	23	0

As is the case with so many aspects of public relations, it is very difficult to place an absolute value on the answers to questions nine and ten. Of the nineteen superintendents who said that "any effort" had been made to cause public relations consciousness several were careful to point out that this consisted of only a passing reference during

a regular faculty meeting. Likewise, of the twenty-three who said that their faculty was encouraged to participate in community activities some admitted that such encouragement was negligible.

TABLE III

Question	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
11. How often does the superintendent speak before some civic group?	17	0	5	1
12. How often do the principals speak before some civic group?	3	11	4	5
13. How often do members of the faculty speak before some civic group?	1	4	9	9

With regard to the questions covered in Table III it should be pointed out that these ratings are relative. For instance, in a small town which might have only one civic club the superintendent might speak to this club one time each year and still consider this to be often. On the other hand, "often" might mean twice each week to a superintendent in a larger town.

TABLE IV

Question	Yes	No
14. Does your school publish a school paper?	13	10
Is it distributed to the students without cost to them?	8	5

In response to the inquiry as to how often the school paper is published only two replied that their paper was published every week, eight indicated bi-weekly, and four are published only once each month.

TABLE V

Question	Yes	No
15. Does your school have a special page in the local paper?	11	12
16. Does your school send news releases regularly to the local paper?	14	9
17. Does the local paper have someone designated to handle school news?	10	13

This survey indicates that there is probably more activity in connection with newspaper releases than in any other phase of public relations among member schools of the ETSSC. Several schools follow the practice of having various members of the faculty and staff prepare news releases or feature articles in given areas at the beginning of the school year. These articles are duplicated and kept in the office of the superintendent who sends them to the newspaper periodically throughout the year. One school has an article about the local school system, or about education in general, in every issue of its daily paper.

One school clips each article about the system and mounts it in a scrapbook. At the end of the year this book is published in a permanent binding and retained for its historical value.

The majority of superintendents interviewed indicated that local newsmen are very cooperative and eager to have more news concerning the school. Some questioned the advisability of having a separate page for school news. This theory was apparently based on the belief that many people will "skip over" a page if they see that it is all school news. It was indicated by some that they feel more people will read feature articles which are scattered throughout the newspaper each day than will read them if they are all placed on a special school page.

Another interesting practice was not reflected in the written questionnaire. It appears that most schools submit articles prior to the happening of an event, but very few submit follow-up articles telling what happened or how it came out. Many papers carry articles announcing that the superintendent is going to speak to a certain civic club, but few print follow-up articles telling what he said in his speech. It was suggested by some superintendents that this reflects one of the basic problems in the field of school public relations--that schools have many occasions to tell the public about what they are "going" to do, but few occasions where they can point with pride to the results of their efforts.

TABLE VI

Question	Yes	No
18. Does your school publish an annual report?	13	10
19. Is it published as a separate brochure?	7	6
20. Is it distributed to all the patrons in your district?	2	5

The three questions above supplied some of the most surprising results of the entire survey. Of the twenty-three schools participating in the survey only two publish an annual report in the form of a brochure and distribute it to all the patrons in the school district. It will be noticed that thirteen answered question number eighteen in the affirmative; however, closer examination indicated that in most cases this report consists of only a mimeographed financial statement which is distributed to the school board. There is at least one excellent example of the annual report, wherein the school publishes a multi-color brochure of several pages. The financial statement is relegated to the back page, with the other pages containing

pictures, graphs, and charts which are easily understood by the patrons, and which interpret the school in a progessional manner.

One school sends a copy of its annual report home by each student and then it places additional copies on the counters of all downtown stores so that non-parent patrons might pick them up. This eliminates the high cost of maintaining a mailing list of all the district's patrons.

In response to question number twenty-one it was determined that eighteen of the twenty-three schools have had bond elections within the past five years. These schools have had a combined total of twenty-five elections, of which 80% were successful. It might be noted that this percentage is well above the national average.

Answering question number twenty-two, sixteen of the schools said that they do have a student handbook which is given to all incoming students. Samples of these handbooks show that they extend all the way from a simple mimeographed sheet of a few rules to a professional printed and bound book. Some of the more complex are revised every year and include pictures of football team, band, cheerleaders, and class officers. Others include school songs and favorite yells, as well as rules and regulations governing school attendance and participation in extra-curricular activities.

TABLE VII

Question	Yes	No
23. Does your school send home report cards?	23	0
24. Do they show any type pupil evaluation other than grades?	20	3

Even though twenty of the twenty-three schools indicated that their report cards show some type of pupil evaluation other than grades it seems

significant that, in most cases, this consists of the teacher placing an "S" or a "U" beside such categories as "deportment," "attitude," and "interest." Only in rare instances was there found evaluation of any real meaning.

TABLE VIII

Question	Yes	No
25. Does your school publish a school yearbook?	23	0
26. Does your school have a PTA?	23	0

While every school system indicated that it has some type of parent-teacher organization, it should be pointed out that every school within the system does not necessarily participate in this activity. In several instances the elementary schools have parent-teacher organizations but the secondary schools do not.

Eleven schools indicated that they have PTA meetings in the afternoon while seventeen schools said that their meetings are held in the evening. It is apparent that this amounts to a total of twenty-eight schools, whereas there were only twenty-three schools participating in the study. This discrepancy can be explained by the fact that, in some systems, having a separate parent-teacher organization for each building, some groups meet in the afternoon while other groups meet in the evening.

It was admitted by most superintendents that attendance at afternoon meetings is very poor and that male participation in these groups is practically nil.

TABLE IX

Question	Yes	No
27. Does your school have a Mothers' Club?	1	22
28. Does your school have a Dads' Club?	2	21
29. Does your school have a Band Booster Club?	12	11
30. Does your school have an Athletic Booster Club?	18	5

While only one school indicated that it has an organized Mothers' Club some of the afternoon PTA groups could actually fit into this category. Most schools have Room Mothers for each room at the elementary level and these groups might also serve a function similar to that of the organized Mothers' Club.

TABLE X

Question	Yes	No
31. Does your school have any type of adult educational program, other than Ag and Home Ec?	9	14
Do you have night classes for adults?	6	17
32. Does your school encourage citizens of the community to use the school building?	21	2

While nine schools indicated that they have an adult education program only six said that they hold classes at night. This would appear to indicate that at least three schools conduct their adult education programs during the daytime when it would be very difficult for working adults to participate.

Concerning question number thirty-two one school said that it does

not have a rule against community use of the school building, although it does not encourage such use; however, one school system indicated that it has a written school board policy prohibiting such use.

TABLE XI

Question	Yes	No
33. Does your school have home projects for Vocational Ag students?	21	2
34. Does your school have home projects for Vocational Home Ec students.	23	0
35. Does your school have home projects for other students?	2	21

According to the preponderence of opinion in public relations textbooks one of the best ways to impress patrons favorably is to get them to come to the school building to attend student productions and performances.

TABLE XII

Question	Yes	No
36. Does your school sponsor any of the following events to which the public is encouraged to come?		
Dramatic productions	22	1
Athletic contests	23	0
Musical programs	20	3
School exhibits (science, etc.)	15	8

Other activities which can be used to attract patrons into the school building include those covered in the next four questions.

TABLE XIII

Question	Yes	No
37. Does your school observe American Education Week?	3	20
38. Does your school observe Texas Public School Week?	23	0
39. Does your school have a Back-to-School-Night?	8	15
40. Does your school have organized Homecoming Activities?	19	4

Participation in the above activities appears to be so varied that a parallel comparison is almost impossible. "Observation" of Texas Public School Week apparently consists of everything from allowing patrons, assuming that any show up, to enter the school building all the way up to putting on a complex promotional campaign and printing multi-color brochures to distribute.

Some schools which answered "yes" to the question concerning a Back-to-School Night hastened to add that this merely meant that all new teachers are introduced at the first PTA meeting of the year. Others indicated that this night includes a tour of the school building, with each parent visiting the room of his child. Here he meets his child's teacher and observes the work which the class has been doing.

In like manner "organized Homecoming Activities" is interpreted to mean everything from a simple announcement welcoming ex-students to a specific football game to an elaborate festivity including dinner and entertainment.

TABLE XIV

Question	Yes	No
41. Do the teachers in your school have regularly-scheduled conferences with parents?	4	19
42. Do the teachers in your school (not counting vocational teachers) make regularly-scheduled visits in the pupils' homes?	2	21

The four superintendents answering "yes" in response to question number forty-one indicated that these conferences are not held by all teachers in the system. In most instances such conferences are limited to the elementary grades.

The same situation exists with regard to question number forty-two. In this case visits are primarily limited to teachers at the first grade level.

Question number forty-three asks whether or not the school has facilities for greeting visitors who come to the building. Eighteen superintendents answered this question in the affirmative, with only five giving a negative answer. However, personal observation of the researcher (who has visited each building in the survey) indicates that there is a great amount of disagreement as to the meaning of the phrase "greeting visitors."

All twenty-three schools indicated in response to question number forty-four that their school board meetings are open to the public; however, only four said that any conscious effort is ever made to get the public to attend them. In fact some of the other nineteen indicated that some effort is made to discourage public attendance. This discouragement usually consists of holding meetings in a small office where there is barely room for the board, making sure that there are no chairs for visitors, and failing to recognize visitors who do occasionally show up. There was at least one

notable exception to this practice. One school holds its board meetings in a small, easily accessible auditorium. There are plenty of chairs for everyone and each meeting includes the opportunity for visitors to comment on the proceedings.

TABLE XV

Question	Yes	No
45. Does your school have an organized program for helping new teachers fit into the community?	8	15
46. Does your school ever conduct polls to determine public opinion in school matters?	7	16
47. Does your school ever make motion pictures to publicize school work and activities?	5	18
48. Does your school have an organized alumni club?	7	16
49. Does your school use the local radio station to publicize school activities?	13	10
50. Does your school issue a "school activities" calendar?	12	11

It appears that there is also a great amount of inconsistency in the answers given to question number forty-five. Eight schools indicated that they have an organized program for helping new teachers fit into the community; however, in some cases this program consists of little more than an informal survey to help the newcomer find housing. Some of the eight schools do have excellent programs in this area, consisting of a cooperative effort involving the Chamber of Commerce, civic club, churches, newspapers, and faculty.

Responses to question number forty-nine probably reflect an unfair picture of activity in this area. Many of the schools included in this survey have no local radio station and the extent to which their patrons listen to

one particular station is varied.

Personal observation of the researcher revealed a great amount of information not covered in the written questionnaire. This information will be discussed in the final chapter under the heading of "Conclusions."

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

I. SUMMARY

Results of the survey indicate the following practices.

1. Administrators in ETSSC member schools do not have adequate assistance to enable them to devote the proper amount of time to public relations.

2. The vast majority of these administrators have given too little attention to their public relations programs. Even in the better organized school systems, it was found that public relations activities have been left largely to chance.

3. Far too few schools have a special person in charge of public relations activities.

4. Superintendents speak before civic groups too often while principals and teachers speak too seldom.

5. Barely more than half the schools surveyed publish a school newspaper and these are published too infrequently.

6. One of the most overlooked public relations possibilities is the annual report. Only two schools out of twenty-three distribute one to all patrons.

7. In spite of obvious shortcomings in the field of public relations, ETSSC member schools have fared better in bond elections than the national

average.

8. There has been little progress in the field of grade reporting. Most schools surveyed are still using the same type report card which they have been using for several generations and only in rare cases do teachers have any type conference with parents.

9. Most schools have a parent-teacher organization of some type, but most are not utilizing them to their best public relations advantage.

10. Too few schools have a program of adult education. Even in cases where such a program does exist, it is usually conducted on too limited a basis.

11. Most schools encourage citizens of the community to use the school building, but in many cases adequate provisions are not made for such use.

12. Most schools sponsor athletic and musical programs where students who are talented along these lines can display their abilities; however, too few sponsor art, sewing, and science exhibits.

13. Very seldom do patrons attend school board meetings.

14. For the most part new teachers joining a system are left to their own efforts to find housing, meet townspeople, and become acquainted with school policies.

15. Much unnecessary confusion arises from the fact that most schools do not issue a school calendar. Churches, civic clubs, and other groups have no way of knowing how to plan their schedules around that of the school.

II. CONCLUSIONS

The researcher would make the following suggestions based on findings

of this survey as compared with programs suggested in textbooks in the field of educational public relations.

1. Administrators should take steps, as finances permit, to employ adequate secretarial or administrative assistance to allow them an appropriate amount of time to devote to school-community relations. If the school system is not large enough to permit this, the administrator should look closely at the possibility of consolidation.

2. Every administrator should give immediate attention to the project of organizing his school's public relations program. This project should involve members of the faculty as well as members of the school board. Long range plans should be made and these plans should be put down in writing. He should design a public relations calendar to insure that each phase of the project gets taken care of at the proper time.

3. Each school system should have one specific person who coordinates the entire public relations program. If finances do not permit the hiring of a full-time public relations specialist, the job might be given to a classroom teacher. In such cases the teacher should be released from teaching for the percentage of time he is expected to devote to public relations activities. This might be just one period each day. But, in any case, this is better than having no one in charge. If this person does not have professional training in public relations, he should be encouraged to attend evening classes, or summer school, to acquire such training. Of course he should receive some extra compensation for this effort.

4. Superintendents should send principals and teachers to fill some of their speaking invitations. This would serve several purposes. It would keep the superintendent from overexposing himself to the community and it

would give the community an opportunity to see that there are other competent people connected with the school. It would also serve as an incentive to faculty members and would probably encourage them to do a better job of preparation.

5. Every school should publish a school paper on a regular basis. It would be up to each school to determine the frequency of publication, but it is questionable whether once each month is often enough under most circumstances. For maximum effectiveness this paper should be distributed free of charge to students as well as patrons. This paper should contain news of interest to students and patrons, and it should be of sufficient quality so that it does not lower the already-existing image of the school.

6. Every school should publish an annual report. This report should contain facts of interest to taxpayers, other than a financial statement. The financial statement should be presented in charts and graphs so that it is understandable and interesting to patrons. Some method should be devised to insure that every patron in the district has access to this report. This is an excellent opportunity to point up current needs of the school as well as needs for future growth.

7. Research should be conducted to determine what kind of grade reporting system the district's patrons prefer. This affords an excellent opportunity to use the community opinion poll, which this survey indicates is sadly neglected by ETSSC schools. Many schools throughout the nation have found effective supplements to the report card--these include parent-teacher conferences, letters, and others.

8. Immediate steps should be taken to salvage some usefulness out of the Parent-Teacher Association. The researcher suggests that every school

administrator take a more active interest in this organization. The administrator should help P.T.A. officers to plan and execute dynamic programs that will attract patrons and hold their interest and should try to direct the group's activities toward something more worthwhile than raising money to buy additional equipment. However, care must be taken that administrators and faculty do not give the impression that they are trying to wrest control of the group from the patrons and to use it for their own purposes.

9. Every school should look into the possibility of maintaining an adult education program. The facilities and equipment are already there. The only things lacking are teachers and promotion. In many instances instruction can be paid for by charging a participation fee, so the only other thing lacking is a promoter.

10. Each school board should draw up written policies governing community use of the school buildings. Definite provisions should be made for custodial service during such use and specific charges should be made to cover the cost of such service, where applicable.

11. Schools should sponsor and promote such things as science fairs and art exhibits where students can display their talents other than on the athletic field. This type of activity attracts a large number of patrons into the school building under very favorable circumstances.

12. A great amount of interest in school activities can be created by influencing patrons to attend school board meetings. This can be done by announcing the time and place of meetings conspicuously, preparing and distributing an agenda in advance, conducting meetings in an efficient manner, and giving visitors an opportunity to be heard at the meetings.

13. Regardless of the size of the school system, it should have an organized system for welcoming a new teacher to the community. This help

should consist of aid in locating suitable housing, introductions to business and social leaders, and assistance in becoming acquainted with school policies and procedures. Many schools assign an "old" teacher to each new teacher for a full year. It is the responsibility of this "old" teacher to see that the new teacher is thoroughly acquainted with every area.

14. Every school should publish a calendar of events at the beginning of each school year. This calendar should contain the dates of all holidays, ball games, plays, concerts, and other special events. This will enable churches, civic clubs, and other groups to plan their activities without interfering with activities of the school. This calendar should be published at least once more as the year progresses.

15. From personal observation, the researcher would suggest that most schools need to post some type of indication as to the location of administrative offices. At one time offices were located rather obviously near the front, or main, entrance to the school building. However, this is no longer true. Remodeling has caused offices to be moved to other areas of older buildings and they are not located in any particular area of newer buildings.

In one town the researcher stopped at a service station to inquire as to the location of the school building. After receiving these directions he asked how he might find the office of the superintendent after locating the building. The answer given by the service station attendent was, "Oh, that will be easy. Just look for the only window with an air-conditioner in it." This appears to be an excellent place for some administrators to begin improving public relations.

After finding the administrator's office in some buildings, the researcher found that his task had just begun. In some instances there was

no one in the office. On more than one occasion he found it necessary to go to a classroom and inquire as to the administrator's whereabouts. If the district does not have ample money to employ a full-time secretary, it seems that the next-best practice would be to have a responsible student sit in the office to greet visitors and answer the telephone. By having a different student do the work each period, the task could be accomplished without undue hardship on anyone.

If the office is not clearly visible from the main entrance, it would probably be better to place a table there and have the student sit at the table rather than wait in the office.

It is the personal opinion of the researcher, based on experiences encountered during the course of this research, that one of the areas most urgently needing improvement is that of secretarial help. The importance of the secretary cannot be overemphasized. She is the first person to greet most visitors; she is the first person to speak to most callers on the telephone; she is the only person in the school system to come into contact with many callers; she handles complaints in a way that determines whether or not many of them are pursued further; and she comes into contact with more teachers than most any other person in the system.

Another area which appears in need of improvement is that of communication between superintendents and staff, especially between superintendent and secretary. In spite of the fact that the researcher made appointments with various superintendents by mail, and these appointments were confirmed by mail, he found that, in most cases, the school secretary was not aware that such an appointment existed.

In conclusion, the researcher would like to express his gratitude to all the superintendents, assistant superintendents, principals, secretaries,

and teachers who cooperated in this survey. It is hoped that these findings will encourage some school personnel to become more aware of relationships with the public.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX

Sample Data-Gathering Instrument

School_____

Superintendent_____

1. Enrollment (ADA) 1. _____

2. Number of full-time professional administrators. 2. _____

3. Number of full-time secretaries and clerks. 3. _____

4. Number of full-time faculty. 4. _____

5. Does your school have a written policy concerning public relations? 5. _____Yes _____No

6. Does your school have an organized public relations program? 6. _____Yes _____No

7. Who is in charge of your school's public relations activities? 7.
   a. Superintendent a. _____
   b. Principal b. _____
   c. Counselor c. _____
   d. Public relations specialist d. _____
   e. Other e. _____

8. How much time does this person devote to public relations? 8. _____100%
   _____50%
   _____25%
   _____less

9. Has any effort been made to cause every member of the faculty and staff to become public relations conscious? 9. _____Yes _____No

10. Is the faculty of your school encouraged to participate in community activities? 10. _____Yes _____No

11. How often does the superintendent speak before some civic group? 11. _____Often
    _____Sometimes
    _____Seldom
    _____Never

12.	How often do the principals speak before some civic group?	12.	_____ Often _____ Sometimes _____ Seldom _____ Never
13.	How often do members of the faculty speak before some civic group?	13.	_____ Often _____ Sometimes _____ Seldom _____ Never
14.	Does your school publish a school paper? How often is it published? Is it distributed to the students without cost to them?	14.	_____Yes _____No _____ _____Yes _____No
15.	Does your school have a special page in the local newspaper?	15.	_____Yes _____No
16.	Does your school send news releases regularly to the local paper?	16.	_____Yes _____No
17.	Does the local paper have someone designated to handle school news?	17.	_____Yes _____No
18.	Does your school publish an annual report?	18.	_____Yes _____No
19.	Is it published in the paper, or is it a separate brochure?	19.	_____Yes _____No
20.	If it is a separate brochure is it distributed to all patrons in the district?	20.	_____Yes _____No
21.	How many bond elections has your school had in the last five years?	21.	_____Yes _____No
22.	Does your school have a student handbook for all incoming students?	22.	_____Yes _____No
23.	Does your school send home report cards?	23.	_____Yes _____No
24.	Do they show any type pupil evaluation other than grades?	24.	_____Yes _____No
25.	Does your school publish a school yearbook?	25.	_____Yes _____No
26.	Does your school have a PTA? When does it meet?	26.	_____Yes _____No _____ Afternoon _____ Evening
27.	Does your school have a Mothers' Club?	27.	_____Yes _____No

28.	Does your school have a Dads' Club?	28.	____Yes____No
29.	Does your school have a Band Booster Club?	29.	____Yes____No
30.	Does your school have an Athletic Booster Club?	30.	____Yes____No
31.	Does your school have any type of adult education, other than home ec and ag?	31.	____Yes____No
	Are these classes at night?		____Yes____No
32.	Does your school encourage citizens of the community to use the school building?	32.	____Yes____No
33.	Does your school have home projects for vocational agriculture students?	33.	____Yes____No
34.	Does your school have home projects for vocational home economics students?	34.	____Yes____No
35.	Does your school have home projects for other students?	35.	____Yes____No
36.	Does your school sponsor any of the following events to which the public is enccuraged to come?	36.	
	Dramatic productions		____Yes____No
	Athletic contests		____Yes____No
	Musical programs		____Yes____No
	School exhibits (science, etc.)		____Yes____No
37.	Does your school observe American Education Week?	37.	____Yes____No
38.	Does your school observe Texas Public School Week?	38.	____Yes____No
39.	Does your school have a Back to School Night?	39.	____Yes____No
40.	Does your school have organized Homecoming Activities?	40.	____Yes____No
41.	Do the teachers in your school have regularly-scheduled conferences with parents?	41.	____Yes____No
42.	Do the teachers in your school (not counting vocational teachers) make regularly-scheduled visits in the pupils' homes?	42.	____Yes____No
43.	Does your school have facilities for receiving and greeting visitors who come to the building?	43.	____Yes____No

44. Are your School Board meetings open to the public? 44. _____Yes_____No
    Is a conscious effort made to get the public to attend them? _____Yes_____No

45. Does your school have an organized program for helping new teachers fit into the community? 45. _____Yes_____No

46. Does your school ever conduct polls to determine public opinion in school matters? 46. _____Yes_____No

47. Does your school ever make motion pictures to publicize school activities? 47. _____Yes_____No

48. Does your school have an organized alumni club? 48. _____Yes_____No

49. Does your school use the local radio station to publicize school activities? 49. _____Yes_____No

50. Does your school issue a "school activities" calendar? 50. _____Yes_____No